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Dear Ms. McGrory,

Reading your today's column is another reminder that as the world grows and develops so much new trouble in growing there are too many important issues on which the best-intended columnists just cannot be as well informed as they should be to be influencing public opinion in a representative society in which, at least in principle, government does what the people want it to do. Intending no offense, please believe me, and saying once again that you not feel obligated to make any response, I ask you to reread the column and then ask yourself if not that it does, whether or not it could be coming from a flat-world understanding of and perspective on the Arab-Israeli situation.

Do you really write reality? Do you have fair and impartial sources in your quotes? Are you impartial in your own opinions? Are you well enough informed about the entire situation, its history, ancient and current?

I think you also ought ask yourself whether in this column and a number before it you are really fair. In this I so not suggest that you intend unfairness. I've read your columns for too long a time to hold any such suspicion.

Before getting into specifics, a suggestion, that to get an impartial view and understanding, you read part of a book by a non-Jewish British Writer, Paul Johnson, the last chapter, "Zion," in his "A History of the Jews." In this I do not suggest that you ignore the rest of the book. Rather do I hope you'll find time for and interest in reading it. This is particularly true because there are two peoples each of whom can make a legitimate claim for the same land.

And an apology for my typing, about which I can do nothing. And my haste, because after some years of living with too many limitations, I have part-time help in returning to my own writing.

At the top of the third column of the jump you say, "The Israelis refuse to consider any solution of the Palestine [sic] issue - other than expulsion and more oppression."

Can it be that you do not remember the Camp David accords, negotiated on Israel's part by a man whose past was not to my liking as his government was not, true also of his successor and his government, and abided by both governments, at not inconsiderable costs to both? Even if this is measured only by the return of the Sinai to Egypt with all the improvements added, including a source of petroleum? How does this accord expel or oppress Arab Palestinians? (I put it this way because all Jews are also Palestinians. Or have you forgotten that we are called Jews after Judea?)

Oppression? Do you know anything at all about the conditions of those Arabs under Egyptian and Jordanian rule until they lost what is now called, by those wanting to have

the world forget history, the past and legitimate claims, the "West Bank," and the Gaza Strip? Johnson is informative on this. But can you think of anything Egypt did other than to oppress? This includes, along with the rest of the Muslim world, opposing improvements Israel wanted to make in physical conditions that required international approval. Can you think of anything Hussein did (and you may not known of one I'll tell you about) to make any improvements? Other than to start, at the cost, relatively considerable in context, to the Arabs of beginning to build himself another summer palace on a Jerusalem hilltop?

Did he create the five universities there?

In 1957 I met an anti-Israeli Arab sent here at government cost to study agriculture at Cornell. Other Israeli Arabs also got foreign educations. I've not heard of a single instance in which Egypt or Jordan did anything like that. Egypt would not even let those Arabs into Egypt except under unusual conditions. They almost never could get any jobs in Egypt as they can and could in Israel.

Can you think of any violence against Arabs by any Israeli government except in reaction to violence started by Arabs? And include in this when Israel had to have bomb-shelters for infants and their mothers and school children for them to take shelter from Arab violence. Why also do you think Israel insists on holding the Golan heights? Or moved into Lebanon, alas, ~~too far~~ farther than was necessary for self-protection? (Have you compared this with similar actions by other governments, in the recent or the distant past, to learn whether or that those were exceptional actions? Did we, for example, have as much justification for taking and holding Pacific islands, and ruining them and their peoples?)

Have you, from your own recollection or from research, compared what you condemn with the history of the world, past and present or either, compared Israeli occupation with the records of other occupiers without and with confrontation with violence that includes innumerable murders, in this instance by Arabs?

What I am getting at is are you well informed and are you fair.

As prelude to more quotes from your column, I ask you if you can remember reading in your own paper's reports or seeing on TV anything on the other side of the view you express? I can't.

You quote Zogby but no opposing view, and, I'm sure without realizing it, you pretend that he is in contact with reality in his words you use and endorse, "We should give Israel every possible security guarantee and assure them they will be more secure if they get out of the west bank and Gaza."

In the first patr he covers himself and keeps from lying with use of "possible" because he knows very well that no "we" can provide any meaningdul "security guarantee." In the second part he is and he knows he is a deliberate liar.

If any Muslim power other than Egypt, whose Sadat did not survive it, intended for any State of Israel to exist, why have they all remained in a state of war and insist on

it today? Why have all Arabs refused to recognize any State of Israel in the more recent past going back to the recommendation of the British Peel Commission in 1937, under which Jews agreed to a state of about 10 percent of today's recognised State of Israel? Other than by the Muslim world, that is. Or to all the other proposals all of which all Arabs rejected out of hand, without even any discussion.

The Post and the rest of the media went for the reluctant words uttered by Arafat when he had no choice and which would be meaningless even if he said what our government pretended he said when he didn't. He did not recognize the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace. Or the government. The only state he mentioned in that statement was the non-existing state he wants to head. He referred instead to "parties." He did not in fact recognize the State of Israel. No Arab leader has ever survived even being suspecting of believing that state has a right to exist. How do you think Hussein got to be King. (And on this, why do you think he changed the name from Trans-Jordan?)

But even if he had in his words said what he did not say or mean and even if in its own policy interests our government lied and said he had said those words it so wanted to hear him say, what meaning could they have when the Palestinian National Council had just met and refused to agree to any such words of promise?

Zogby knows he is a liar in saying that Israel would be "more secure if they get out of the West Bank and Gaza" because he knows that there is no controlling the many violence-prone Palestinian factions or the Arab powers that finance and succor them and bedause he knows that any ruler who does recognize the existence of the State of Israel has little chnace of surviving it. Witness Sadat, Abdullah and all the Arabs who met with Israelis in Europe with such a thought in mind. and were killed.

Even after denouncing and rejecting violence against Israel Arafat did not dare even criticize his own faction when they were caught in it. Knowing, too, as he did, how this would damage his relations with at least the U.S.

Not only does Zogby know that there is no controlling all of the Arab factions in their wholesale fratricide, to which the press gives scant attention and, as best I recall, you none, he also knows that without the West Bank much of Israel is within easy range of the artillery they already have, to say nothing of hand-held killing devices like rockets, or border-crossings with murder in mind at night.

How secure would you feel with such sworn enemies so well equipped and so determined if you were nine miles or less from them? That is what would be true of part of Israel. It is so narrow in places it is close to indefensible against a determined foe even with the West Bank.

Quoting nobody you say that Palestinians "have no place to go." First of all this is not true today if you mean and still be in what came to be known as Palestine and was that until Trans-Jordan was created as the Arab Palestinian state promised by Britain, which then did not keep its promise to do the same for Jews with what remained. More than three-

quarters of the original Palestine is today Jordan. I think it is possible for those with no personal involvement to regard any movement of those people into Jordan as no more giving up a homeland than moving between Virginia and Maryland.

What you just do not realize and what the actual record leaves beyond reasonable question is that the Arabs want no State of Israel to exist, despite what is said and inferred. This is why ever earlier offer was rejected without any discussion whatsoever and why none except Egypt recognize the Camp David accords.

And that is what really accounts for what is in the words of Hisham Sharabi, the "anger and despair." It was really "nourished" by those states, none close to a real democracy when Iarael came into being, all fearing for their peoples to see the shining light of a democratic state and what it meant to those peoples with democracy. Aside from millenia of racial hatred engendered by the founder of their religion who perpetrated the last major holocaust before Hitler's. Again, I think you'll find Johnson informative.

Back to having no place to go, does it not occur to you that it was at the least unusual for Arab states like Egypt to refuse to provide a haven for coreligionists and racial brothers, as so many states have for refugees over the ages? As one Egyptian authority, I think quoted in Johnson, said," the refugees are our artillery against Israel."

I do find it hard to believe that you really think what you said of the war with Saddam, "its underlying cause (is) the Arab-Israeli problem." If I were to say anything more - fear it might be misunderstood for what I do not have in mind, being insulting. Well, one thing more - Saddam's ambitions?

Have you in any column or in your thinking or do you remember from anything at any time, any comparison between the Arab-Israeli situation and comparable situations not only throughout history but in the recent past? Have you been as emotional about Prussians becoming part of Poland? Of Poles becoming part of the USSR? Of some many similar if not comparable situations? Even of Puerto Ricans becoming part of the United States? Is not the only exceptional element the fact that Israel is a Jewish state?

How many occupying powers of the recent past can you recall that made as many efforts to improve the lot of the people living in the land they occupied, even when those occupiers, unlike Jews, could not make the claim that the land had been their land from which they had been expelled by the ancestors of those living in it? Look, for example, at what the U.S. did to and about Philippinos and Puerto Ricans who wanted to be free in their own land? Have you any idea of the number of Philippinos the U.S. killed?

I am reminded of a painful lesson I learned from Les Payne before he became a Newsday editor, when we were both working in Memphis, together and separately, on the King assassination. I don't know what got him started on it but as we rode in the same cab to the airport he gave me to understand clearly and with eloquence and passion I could not

begin to duplicate, that no matter how free we think we whites are of prejudice against blacks, it is born into us. and here I was who went back in efforts to help black movements to before World War II and who in it led a sitdown strike in Walter Reed's reconditioning component because whites only were to be taken to a swimming pool all-white in Greenbelt. I regret Les convinced me. We all have far to go.

I take this time for two basic reasons. One is the great respect I have for your writing, particularly your columns of recent years. The other is that I fear another holocaust for reasons that are very real, reasons that have and will dominted every Israeli government.

What other common-sense reason is there for all the Muslim world except for Egypt to persist in a state of war with Israel, for the Palestinian National Council ~~committee~~ to refuse to change its charter's insistence on driving all the Jews out of Israel, for Arafat to refuse to make any statement and they to avoid a straightforward recognition of the right of the Jew to live in peace and security within their own states borders?

I have not been a practising Jew since I met my family obligations and was confirmed as a man at 13. My only interest in Israel is for those Jews who want to live there as in their own homeland, and it is the land from which we all spring and would still all be in were it not for the Arabs and before them so many, including the Greeks and Romans, in peace and with security, to be able to do so.

I am the first member of my family to have been born into freedom and it means much to me. The Jews who estabiloshed the State of Israel, against seemingly insuperable odds, were mostly those without my birthright. Most Jews who moved into Israel left persecutions, notably at the hands of Arabs, that were simply terrible. Some had all their property confiscated as a condition of being able to leave. Some still are denied permission to leave and emigrate from Arab states and Iran.

Most Jews who know the history of those who preceeded them know how right Santayana was when he said that those of us who do not remember the past are doomed to relive it. If Israeli Jews are not widely aware of this wisdom, can you not see that it is nonetheless their understanding of reality?

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

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